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SUBJECT: Joint Russian-U.S. Demarche to Belgium on the
Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism

REF: (A) STATE 21535, (B) 03 STATE 333924

¶1. Summary: On March 14, Russian Ambassador Vadim Lukov and Charge d'Affaires Will Imbrie presented to Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director for Security and Disarmament Pol De Witte and Director for Non-Proliferation Werner Bauwens the invitation to join the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (Ref A). Both diplomats underscored the importance of the Global Initiative to their two nations and their joint goal of seeing it adopted world-wide. Acknowledging the "political" importance of a joint demarche, Bauwens voiced several reservations: the costs, time and energy that Global Initiative membership might presume; its "redundancy," lest the Global Initiative be a needless duplication of already-existing, broader legal commitments required by UNSCR 1540 and membership in the International Atomic Energy Agency. He drew a parallel with the "Oslo process" on cluster munitions, in which Belgium is heavily engaged, which risks undermining the effectiveness of the broader Convention on Conventional Weapons. Bauwens asked if the European Union - specifically the European Council - had also been asked to join, as the EU already was doing much to stem nuclear terrorism that should be coordinated with any new effort.

¶2. Drawing on instructions from Moscow, Lukov responded that the Global Initiative represents a group of motivated nations that can serve as a spearhead to catalyze others to deal with the pressing question of nuclear terrorism. Thus, it is more effective than slow, tortuous negotiations of a lowest, common denominator such as at the UN. In October 2006, the UN produced the basic principles of the initiative. Together with the IAEA, the Global Initiative would enforce unavoidable punishment of terrorists by strengthening the legal system and cooperation in technical means to develop and prevent nuclear terrorism. A plan was also agreed, Lukov continued, to implement Global Initiative principles by the original signatory states and others that join. Belgium, with its reputation in preventing nuclear diffusion, had an important role to play. It was hoped that the Government of Belgium would join by notifying Russia and/or the U.S., before the next Global Initiative

meeting in Kazakhstan in June 2007.

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¶5. Imbrie underscored the full Russian and U.S. agreement in the Global Initiative and added that the IAEA is an observer member of the Global Initiative. Handing over Ref A points on the Global Initiative, Imbrie remarked that Belgium should find it easy to endorse the organization's principles and work plan, which he hoped Belgium would provide its expertise to help develop.

The Response: Yes, But...

¶6. Director of Common Security, Defense and Disarmament Pol De Witte thanked Lukov and Imbrie, noting that the joint nature of the demarche underscored the political importance of the initiative. He then turned the floor over to Director of Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Werner Bauwens.

¶7. Stating that he was already familiar with content of the demarche, Bauwens remarked that the Global Initiative was similar to the approach of the Proliferation Security Initiative (Ref B), which Belgium had joined as had most of the European Union. Bauwens suggested that, like PSI, the Global Initiative might be "embedded" in a larger existing framework, e.g. UNSCR 1373 or 1540. What was its "added value"? Further, all EU players including the European Council should receive the demarche so that everyone could act together to avoid duplication. The EU was already doing much to prevent nuclear terrorism. Could not the Global Initiative be folded into initiatives that already exist?

¶8. Belgium's core questions, Bauwens continued, are: Who does what? Does the Global Initiative not represent a "turning away" from the legal requirements already imposed by UNSCRs 1373 and 1540, to which it appears redundant? What are the organizational details and financial expectations of membership? PSI imposed a great burden so Belgium wanted to know from the start expected resource requirements. Belgium's strong preference, he concluded, was to avoid any duplication. Nonetheless, he expected the founding partners could expect "to count us in."

Music to the Ears

¶9. Citing the G-8 as an example, AMB Lukov responded that "there are two ways to attack" an issue: negotiate in plenary session, which is slow, painful and reaches the lowest common denominator, or begin through a small group of motivated parties that catalyze others to action. This latter has been the method to fight terrorism, as in negotiating UNSCR 1540. Pointing out Russia's planned activities to promote the Global Initiative, he suggested that Bauwens look closely at the proposed action plan and see where Belgium might fill in gaps to generate new knowledge and initiatives. He summed up by stating that the Global Initiative would welcome the input of Belgium and Bauwens at its coming meeting in Astana.

¶10. Imbrie stated that the Global Initiative posed no contradiction to IAEA efforts of the past seventeen years but rather, like PSI, was intended to fill gaps created in the non-proliferation agreements. He stated that, on specific expectations of membership, Global Initiative partners might ask Belgium to organize a conference and actively participate in meetings. Partners would be expected to fund initiatives they sponsored, but other costs would be for participation in Global Initiative events.

The Bottom Line

¶11. De Witte asked if the demarche had been sent to all EU members, suggesting that Belgium could work the topic

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into an all-EU agenda. Imbrie confirmed that all EU members were being contacted but not the European Council itself; he would suggest that to the State Department. Bauwens proposed that the GOB would see to it that the Global Initiative be put on the agenda of the next Council working group meeting. Imbrie observed that an approach to the Council should not delay the decisions of its individual member nations. Bauwens stated he expected that even after EU coordination, Belgium would be able to reply by late April or early May; "We have to go through the motions of a transparent approach" as an EU member, he observed.

¶12. Subsequently, Imbrie learned from EU PSC Ambassador Dirk Wauters that Belgium had already contacted him concerning EU coordination and expected that the EU would support the initiative.
IMBRIE